SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI: Please come to the States.

DR. C.P. THAKUR: I am coming to that. The States, in India, are independent on matters of health. They have got a right to formulate certain policies. But after they have done it, I have written to the Chief Ministers of all the States.....(*Interruptions*) No, no. (*Interruptions*) Health is a State subject. (*Interruptions*) After they have announced this policy, I have written to all the Chief Ministers, stating therein, that you make a policy, which is in consonance with the national policy. I have written to them. (*Interruptions*)

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी: आप अगैंस्ट में जा सकते हैं? (व्यवधान)...क्या यह नेशनल पालिसी है?...(व्यवधान)...

SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI: I think Madhya Pradesh has.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Defective Thermometers in Chemist Shops

*444. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the thermometers used for measuring body temperature now available in the chemist shops are unreliable and defective as most of these thermometers show incorrect reading leading to confusion among the patients;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the manner in which these defective thermometers find their way to the chemist shops across the country; and

(c) what action Government have taken to ensure that the thermometer manufacturers get ISI standardisation mark on the product they put for sale in the country?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) There have been reports that some of the clinical thermometers available in the market are inaccurate and/or deficient in certain other aspects.

(b) The Standards of Weights & Measures Act 1976 provides that

every unit of weight or measures shall be based on the metric system. Thermometers are, therefore, to be marked only in degree Celsius. Most of the manufacturers, however, have been making thermometers with Fahrenheit marking or dual marking, i.e. with degree Fahrenheit and Celsius. Manufacture, sale and use of such non-standard thermometers amounts to contravention of the Standards of Weights & Measures Act, 1976 and the Standards of Weights & Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1985. Such non-standard thermometers are, therefore, not submitted by the manufacturers for verification by the Weights & Measures enforcement authorities in the States. Enforcement authorities in some States are carrying out inspections of retail shops to check the sale of non-standard thermometers and launching prosecution in suitable cases.

(c) Government propose to take action under the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act, 1986 to direct the use of the BIS standard mark under a license as compulsory for enclosed scale and solid stem type clinical thermometers to ensure that such thermometers manufactured and sold in the market meet the requirements of the Weights & Measures laws and also conform to the quality standards prescribed by BIS.

Collection of passport applications through postal department

*445. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the postal department has been collecting fresh passport applications on behalf of the passport department from semi-urban areas in Karnataka;

(b) if so, how many such applications were received through postal department;

(c) whether collection system by the postal department has helped the passport seekers in Karnataka; and

(d) whether more collection centres would be opened at Bellary, Raichur, Mysore, Udupi and Gulbarga?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Nine National speed post centres in Karnataka have been collecting fresh passport applications on behalf of the passport office w.e.f. 5th March, 2001.